

Policy Regarding the Use of Diocesan and Parish Facilities in the Diocese of Sacramento

1.0 Introduction.

1.1 The churches, schools, halls, buildings, and grounds of the parishes and diocesan facilities in the Diocese of Sacramento represent an important element of the patrimony of the Church. The People of God in the Diocese of Sacramento, over many generations, have lovingly shared their temporal resources with the Church in order to ensure that the ministry of the Church would continue to flourish, that there shall always be adequate means to provide for the pastoral care of souls, and that the Gospel may be proclaimed in full fidelity with the Truth to all people living in the territory of the Diocese. The care and stewardship over these resources is vouchsafed in the Diocesan Bishop and the pastors who collaborate in his ministry throughout the Diocese.

1.2 Church buildings and grounds are more than mere structures. They are visual and tangible symbols of the Church, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly true of parish churches and parish facilities, for it is in the parishes that the Catholic faithful gather regularly around the altar of the Lord to celebrate the Paschal mystery of the Eucharist. Thus, mindful of centrality of the altar to the life of our parishes and our Diocese, it is a matter of considerable pastoral importance that our parish churches, halls, schools, buildings, grounds, and diocesan facilities be used at all times in a manner consistent with their sanctified nature, as visible symbols of the Church.

1.3 Therefore, the Bishop of Sacramento, consistent with his pastoral and episcopal obligation to faithfully steward the patrimony of the Church in the Diocese of Sacramento has promulgated this Policy Regarding the Use of Diocesan and Parish Facilities and directs all pastors, parochial administrators, Newman Center directors, and lay employees and volunteers responsible for the use of diocesan and parish facilities to implement and comply with this Policy.

2.0 Use of Diocesan and Parish Facilities.

2.1 Use of diocesan and parish facilities must, at all times, be consistent with, and in fidelity to, Catholic religious and moral teachings and beliefs and must respect the religious and liturgical character and nature of such facilities.

2.2 Any use of diocesan and parish facilities that is incompatible with the religious and liturgical character of diocesan and parish facilities is prohibited.

2.3 Any use of diocesan and parish facilities by an organization, group, or individual who, by word or conduct, promotes views, values, or beliefs contrary to Catholic religious and moral belief and teachings is prohibited.

2.4 No event or activity shall be permitted to occur at diocesan or parish facilities that would, directly or indirectly, advocate or otherwise promote teachings, beliefs, views, values, or conduct contrary to Catholic religious and moral teachings and beliefs or that might have propensity to cause confusion or scandal among the faithful regarding the authentic teachings and beliefs of Catholic Church.

2.5 The use of churches, oratories, and chapels must at all times be consistent with their sacred liturgical and ecclesial character according to the canons and ecclesial norms applicable to such facilities.

2.6 Pastors shall implement and apply this Policy with regard to their respective parish facilities using their best pastoral judgment and shall implement and employ appropriate procedures and measures to ensure that this Policy is uniformly and consistently applied. In the event of any ambiguity, the Bishop of Sacramento shall serve as the final arbiter as to the application of this Policy to particular facts and circumstances.

3.0 Initial Request to Use Parish or Church Facilities and Review of Such Requests.

3.1 Any individual, group, or organization requesting to use or to rent a parish or diocesan facility must, prior to consideration of their request, complete a form questionnaire regarding the nature of the event proposed to be held at the diocesan or parish facility and seeking information regarding the individual, group, or organization. The Diocese shall prepare the form questionnaire and shall provide a copy of the questionnaire in English and Spanish to each parish in a form that can be reproduced for use.

3.2 Parish groups, which have been approved by the parish pastor, and diocesan organizations, which are listed in the *Diocese of Sacramento Directory* published by the Diocese of Sacramento or the *Official Catholic Directory* published by P.J. Kenedy & Sons, shall not be required to complete a form questionnaire prior to requesting to use or rent parish or diocesan facilities.

3.3 The Pastor, in the case of parishes, or the Vicar for Temporalities, in the case of the Diocese, shall review the responses provided by applicants on the questionnaires and determine whether the event proposed would be an appropriate use of parish or diocesan facilities under this Policy and whether the applicant individual, group, or organization would be an appropriate user or renter, under the terms of this Policy, to use such facilities. Copies of these questionnaires shall be retained with the business records of the parish and/or the Diocese.

3.4 If the Pastor or Vicar for Temporalities determines that the request is not appropriate under this Policy, he shall promptly notify the applicant that the requested facilities are not available for use or rent.

3.5 If the Pastor or Vicar for Temporalities determines that the request is appropriate under this Policy, he shall cause a Facilities Use Agreement to be sent to the requesting party for execution. The Diocese shall prepare a form Facilities Use Agreement for this purpose and shall

provide a copy of the Facilities Use Agreement in English and Spanish to each parish in a form that can be reproduced for use.

4.0 Inappropriate Groups and Organizations.

4.1 Any organization or group which, by word or conduct, teaches, advocates, or otherwise promotes views, values, or beliefs contrary to Catholic religious and moral belief and teachings shall not be permitted to use or rent diocesan or parish facilities.

4.2 Organizations or groups that would be unsuitable to use or rent diocesan or parish facilities for events would include, but not be limited to, those that:

- 4.2.1 Promote, advance, or advocate racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious discrimination.
- 4.2.2 Promote, advance, or advocate anti-Catholicism, anti-Catholic biases, or are directly or indirectly hostile to the Catholic Church, the Catholic clergy, or Catholic people in general.
- 4.2.3 Engage in partisan political activity as the principal purpose of the group or organization, including political parties, political candidate committees, partisan political clubs or committees, and the like.
- 4.2.4 Promote, advance, or advocate teachings, views, policies, or beliefs contrary to the Culture of Life, including any group or organization that directly or indirectly promotes, advocates, or engages in activities related to abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, artificial contraception, voluntary sterilization, or capital punishment.
- 4.2.5 Promote, advance, or advocate teachings, views, policies, or beliefs contrary to the Church's teachings and beliefs regarding the sanctity of marriage, the call to sexual abstinence and chastity outside marriage, and the centrality of family life as a cultural cornerstone, including groups or organizations that promote or advocate, directly or indirectly, sexual license, pornography and obscenity, adultery, marital infidelity, cohabiting in sexual relationships of any nature outside marriage, homosexual activity or relationships, "gay marriage," the adoption and/or placement of children in anything other than a traditional family setting, and the like.
- 4.2.6 Promote, advance, or advocate teachings, views, policies, or beliefs contrary to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, the Deposit of Faith, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, or authentic Catholic theology, as determined by the pastor and the Bishop of Sacramento, including such groups or organizations that deny, refute, ridicule, or condemn the fundamental Truths of the Catholic faith. This shall exclude the use, with the permission of the Bishop, of parish and diocesan facilities for worship or religious services by other Christian denominations on an ad hoc basis.

- 4.2.7 Promote, advance, or advocate secularism, the paring back of religious freedom rights, or the restriction of religious liberty and liberty of conscience.
- 4.2.8 Promote, advance, or advocate the abuse of alcohol or the use of narcotics or other controlled substances.
- 4.2.9 Promote, advance, or advocate violence or the use of force to resolve social, political, or religious problems.

4.3 With regard to outside organizations and groups, any questions regarding the propriety of permitting such groups to use or rent parish or diocesan facilities under this Policy shall, in general and in the interests of prudence, be resolved against permitting such use or rental.

5.0 Inappropriate Events or Activities.

5.1 Any event or activity that would, directly or indirectly, advocate or otherwise promote teachings, beliefs, views, values, or conduct contrary to Catholic religious and moral teachings and beliefs or that might have propensity to cause confusion or scandal among the faithful regarding the authentic teachings and beliefs of Catholic Church shall not be permitted at parish or diocesan facilities.

5.2 Events or activities that would be unsuitable would include, but not be limited to, any event or activity that directly or indirectly relates to the advocacy or promotion of, or cooperation with:

- 5.2.1 Racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious discrimination.
- 5.2.2 Anti-Catholicism or anti-Catholic biases.
- 5.2.3 Partisan political activity of any kind, direct or indirect.
- 5.2.4 Abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, contraception, voluntary sterilization, or capital punishment.
- 5.2.5 Sexual license, pornography and obscenity, adultery, marital infidelity, cohabiting in sexual relationships of any nature outside marriage, homosexual activity or relationships, “gay marriage,” and the adoption and/or placement of children in non-traditional family settings.
- 5.2.6 The denial, refutation, ridicule, or condemnation of the fundamental Truths of the Catholic faith.
- 5.2.7 The paring back of religious freedom rights or the restriction of religious liberty and liberty of conscience.

5.2.8 The abuse of alcohol and the use narcotics or other controlled substances.

5.2.9 Violence or the use of force to resolve social, political, or religious problems.

5.3 With regard to outside organizations and groups, any questions regarding the propriety of any event or activity under this Policy shall, in general and in the interests of prudence, be resolved against permitting such use or rental of diocesan or parish facilities.

6.0 Conditions of Use.

6.1 The religious character and nature of diocesan and parish property must, at all times, be respected by those individuals, groups, and organizations using diocesan and parish facilities. Religious symbols and images shall not be removed, altered, or deliberately obscured and all persons entering on to the premises should be admonished to respect the religious nature of the facility. This should include requesting persons entering the facility to act appropriately in worship spaces, to refrain from disrupting private prayer or ongoing liturgies, and to treat religious objects, art and images with appropriate reverence and respect.

6.2 All individuals, groups, and organizations must comply with the Diocese of Sacramento's safe environment policies and procedures in all activities in which children or young people are present. Adequate supervision and security must be provided for at all times with regard to the presence of children and young people on diocesan and parish property.

6.3 Any individual, group, or organization using or renting diocesan or parish facilities must provide an endorsed policy of general liability insurance applicable to the event, naming the Diocese and the Parish as an additional named insured and providing coverage limits in an amount as prescribed by the Diocesan Finance Department.

6.4 Individuals, groups, or organizations using or renting parish facilities must expressly agree to follow the directives of the parish pastor, or his designees, regarding the use of the facilities and must do so when using or renting the facility.

6.5 Any individual, group, or organization using or renting diocesan or parish facilities must provide appropriate and adequate security, at their own expense, during their activities or events. The pastor shall designate the level of security services required with regard to the use of parish facilities. The Vicar for Temporalities shall designate the level of security services required with regard to the use of diocesan facilities.

Approved and promulgated the 13th day of March in the year 2006 at the Pastoral Center,
Sacramento, California.

WILLIAM K. WEIGAND
Bishop of Sacramento

In witness whereof:

Rev. Blaise Berg, S.T.D.
Vice-Chancellor